

## Against the Grain

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## ATG Food and Beverage Round Up- Charleston, SC

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# ATG Food + Beverage Roundup — Charleston, SC

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**Nicole Ameduri, Springer Nature** Licensing Manager, loves eating her way through conferences. Through some random twist of fate or luck, she ended up with a number of chefs, restaurant managers, famous sommeliers and food writers in her close circle of friends. They have steered her in the right direction for every destination on her calendar. **Melanie Masserant, Springer Nature** Account Development Manager, fancies unique cocktails while gallivanting to conferences across Canada and the U.S. She collects interesting cocktail vinegars and syrups to concoct her own creations. Her favorite is a Bloody Mary mixed bourbon, cider vinegar and pickle juice. We're excited to share fabulous Charleston restaurants and bars with you!

## Nicole's Picks — Restaurants

**#1. Zero Restaurant & Bar:** Conde Nast named **Zero George** one of the Top 5 foodie hotels in the world. Rightfully so, dining there was one of the best dining experiences of my life! Their interpretation of the amuse bouche is unforgettable — radishes in a clay pot that appeared as though it was filled with soil, but is actually filled with toasted quinoa and decadent butter. Diners pull the radishes out by the fronds, just as you would pull them from soil. Years ago, I created a community garden and recall pulling my first radishes out of the soil and eating them. The way **Zero Bar** serves them brought back the farm-to-mouth experience I had growing them in New York.

For our main entrées, I ordered the cobia. It was grilled and glazed with yuzu and chili. My husband ordered the chicken with carrots in smoked butter with warm herbs. For dessert, we had cheese and the tres leches with young coconut and honeycomb. The creativity and perfect execution made me suspect the chef was from New York. Upon speaking with the chef, my hunch was verified. He is from Brooklyn.

**Zero Bar** features a creative mix of craft cocktails; beer and curated wines — they have a private label from their sister winery in Virginia. They also have a cooking school that offers classes. I'm taking one before the **Charleston Library Conference** and can't wait!

**Address:** 0 George Street, Charleston, SC 29401, <https://zerorestaurantcharleston.com/>.

**#2. Butcher & Bee:** Hands down, my favorite brunch spot in Charleston — I even had my 40th birthday brunch here. They cre-

ate their menu based on the freshest, seasonal ingredients. All produce is locally sourced and meats are sustainably raised.

Their breakfast menu features unlikely pairings like whipped ricotta toast with chili honey. Depending on the season, lunch could be heirloom beans with jalapeno vinaigrette, Jimmy red cornbread or a roast beef sandwich with smoked onion jam. Dinner combines midday elements such as kebab platters and crispy half chicken. My Turkish husband especially enjoys the Middle Eastern touches on the menu like the roasted beets with labneh, hummus and the semolina cake.

Must haves: house-made pickle plate, Moroccan carrots, falafel, grilled radishes, Persian herb salad, pan seared local fish and the cheese board.

**Address:** 1085 Morrison Drive, Charleston, SC 29403, <https://butcherandbee.com/food>.

**#3. The Wreck of the Richard & Charlene:** Nestled on the water, this seafood restaurant overlooks the beautiful Shem Creek in the Old Village section of Mt. Pleasant, which is a 20 minute drive from downtown Charleston. Their no frills dining room is a screened in porch with plastic furniture. They serve free boiled peanuts, cold beer, fried shrimp and my favorites — hush puppies and banana pudding. They also have key lime pie and bread pudding.

Based on the suggestion of an old friend who once lived in Mt. Pleasant, I added it to the itinerary for my husband's surprise 40th birthday trip to Charleston. It's nearly impossible to find, being located on a dirt road, but worth the search. Upon arrival a black cat greeted us and led us out onto the deck where we watched the sun set while dining. My husband and I go back annually!

**Address:** 106 Haddrell Street, Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464, CASH ONLY, <https://www.wreckrc.com/>.



**#4. The Obstinate Daughter:** The **Obstinate Daughter** is a masterful convergence of rustic Italian cooking and Low Country Seafood on Sullivan's Island. This nautical themed space is green certified, and its chef **Jacques Larson** was recently nominated for a James Beard Award.

During last year's conference two of my librarian friends were game for the excursion. I'm a native of Massachusetts, so I had to try the oysters. **Alexandra** had a wood-fired pizza with local clams. We also sampled roasted beets with pomegranate molasses, which is a Turkish ingredient that has become available in U.S. restaurants. Some other favorites include farro with brussel sprouts and black truffle, grilled octopus with olive tapenade and ricotta gnocchi with short rib ragu. Save room for dessert — there is a gelateria downstairs!

**Address:** 2063 Middle Street, Sullivan's Island, SC 29482, <http://www.theobstinatedaughter.com/>.

**#5. Grace & Grit: Chef Kline's** fresh and playful approach to Low Country cuisine has earned his restaurant Platinum status from the Sustainable Seafood Initiative. The menu is creative yet approachable. Diners enjoy fresh local fish and shrimp, seasonal produce and in-house smoked bacon, which enhances hits like fried green tomatoes and she-crab chowder.

Southern staples like cornbread, collards, butter beans and grits take the center stage. Speaking of grits, THEY HAVE A GRIT FLIGHT — 15 VARIETIES! There are sweet options like blueberry and coconut cream. Originally a skeptic, I actually loved the blueberry grits! My favorites of the savory variety were pimiento cheese and brussels pesto. Guests can choose from three types of local fish and six different preparations in the chef's menu. My favorite is the blackened wreck fish with butter beans and creamed corn.

**Address:** 320 Wingo Way, Suite 100, Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464, <https://gracegrit.com/>.

## Melanie's Picks — Bars

**#1. Rarebit:** If you favor bold and boozy Mad Men inspired cocktails, stop by the **Rarebit**. This retro-styled bar's cocktail menu offers an array of old classics from the Sazerac to the Singapore Sling. They also serve Corpse Reviver, a gin cocktail which was popularized by the 1930s *Savoy Cocktail Book* and originally devised as a hangover cure.

Their tonics, bitters + ginger and root beer are house made. In

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fact, their Moscow Mule (Smirnoff vodka, limeade and Sweatman's ginger beer) is so popular that it's on tap — and accounted for 20 percent of their sales on their opening night in 2012. I despise vodka, but their ginger beer gives it perfect balance. I've been fortunate enough to attend the **Charleston Library Conference** for the past five years, and no matter how packed my schedule is I always make time to knock back a few Moscow Mules.

**Address:** 474 King Street, Charleston, SC 29403, <https://therarebit.com/>.

**#2. Bar Mash:** This popular whiskey bar is part of the Old Cigar Factory's restaurant and bar pair, **Mercantile and Mash**, and creates high-quality cocktails. Their menu highlights domestic spirits, beer, wine and craft cocktails, as well as elevated bar food. For whiskey lovers, sip The Slow Burn, made of Highland Park Magnus, chamomile tea, cayenne maple, lemon and ginger. If you're craving something sweet, try the Pablo Pibb made of Wyoming whiskey, cherry syrup, fernet branca, lemon and cola.

**Bar Mash** is ideal for small to mid-size groups as it hosts a bevy of house entertainment options, such as live bluegrass, a bocce court, shuffle board, the 1980s game Defender and an old-fashioned jukebox.

**Address:** 701 E Bay Street, Charleston, SC 29403, <https://www.barmashchs.com/>.

**#3. Cocktail Club:** Located in the historic 1881 building, the **Cocktail Club** is above its sister restaurant, the **Macintosh**, and draws inspiration from Prohibition era speakeasies — but only its interior, not the cocktails. It occupies 2,500 square feet and their custom bar is made of reclaimed wood salvaged from the original structure from 1881. It features three lounge areas with leather couches, chairs, fireplaces and wood barrels — and a rooftop terrace with a garden which produces fresh garnishes for their creative cocktails.

This upscale lounge has an extensive selection of unique liquors and cocktails like the Johnny Dagger, made with Jefferson small batch bourbon, Pierre Ferrand dry curaco, walnut liqueur, all spice and Angostura Bitters. If you crave gin, try the Macho Man Dandy Savage, made with dandelion-infused gin, yellow chartreuse, wildflower honey, house-made orange bitters and fresh lemon. If you're drinking as a group, go in on the Pimm's Punch — serves 4-6 — made of Pimm's Kronin Punsch, curacao highlighted with strawberries, mint, lime, cucumber & ginger ale.

**Address:** 479 King Street, #200, Charleston, SC 29403, <https://www.thecocktailclub-charleston.com/>.

**#4. Vintage Lounge:** Last year the **Vintage Lounge** was named the most beautifully

designed bar in South Carolina by *Architectural Digest*. The décor is a mix of *Casablanca* vibes and eclectic antiques from Paris, and features an incredible barrel ceiling with gold-leaf detailing. Husband and wife team **Kathleen** and **Mike Shuler** created the **Vintage Lounge** to be a haven for oenophiles. They offer wine flights that include Burgundy, Aligote, Gamay and Pinot Noir as well as wine cocktails like the New York Sour with bourbon, lemon and red

wine. They also challenge guests to test their wine knowledge blindfolded — if you're correct the glass is on the house!

**Address:** 545 King Street, Charleston, SC 29403, <https://vintagechs.com/>.

**#5. Citrus Club:** This rooftop bar above the Dewberry has the highest viewpoint in the city, and one can see as far as the Atlantic Ocean, weather permitting.

To enter, visitors must make a reservation two weeks in advance and check-in at the host stand in the Dewberry lobby. This secluded spot is ideal for meetings with library vendors and publishers. Libations range from the tropical — frozen pina colodas, frozen banana foster and Polynesian Pearl Diver — to craft beer and wine.

**Address:** 334 Meeting Street, Charleston, SC 29403, <https://www.thedewberrycharleston.com/>. 🍷

